



AOT in Action

TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from the Director:

Good morning.

I hope everyone enjoyed the three-day weekend and took a little time to travel around this great state to see some of Arizona's wonderful vacation destinations.

It was a great weekend out at Phoenix International Raceway. AOT was pleased to be a sponsor of the ARIZONA.Travel 200 NASCAR BUSCH Series race at PIR on Saturday, November 10. Race fans from around the country traveled here to join us for an exciting weekend of racing. Throughout the weekend events AOT staff was available to answer travel and tourism questions about the Grand Canyon State for residents and visitors alike. Additionally, the Arizona.Travel 200 was broadcast nationally so NASCAR fans around the U.S. were treated to beautiful Arizona images and the Arizona.Travel Web site received tremendous exposure.

Have a great week.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margie A. Emmermann". The script is fluid and cursive.

Margie A. Emmermann
Director
Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News Flash

AOT Launches Travel Deals

AOT launched the agency's new and innovative Travel Deals section of the agency's consumer Web site www.Arizonaguide.com. Travel Deals, formerly Arizona Vacation Values, was created as an opportunity for statewide businesses to post great new travel and vacation deals for visitors planning a trip to the Grand Canyon State. The Web site features cutting-edge technology including several new enhancements such as an easier search engine for visitors to find and compare great vacation ideas from all across the state. And businesses will find that the new technology will make it easier to post vacation deals and the ability to combine their travel deal with another business to create the ultimate travel and vacation package. I hope everyone takes some time to review the new section. This is a great tool to highlight many of Arizona's amazing vacation destinations and activities. To register and to post new deals, please visit the Travel Deals section of www.azot.gov. Your travel deal will then appear on the consumer Web site www.Arizonaguide.com.

Arizona Tourism University (ATU) Presents How to Develop an Interactive Marketing Strategy Workshop

ATU, the educational outreach program created by the Arizona Office of Tourism, is designed to educate statewide tourism organizations on tried and true tourism marketing tactics and the latest developments in the industry. The ultimate goal of ATU is to give communities the tools and resources they need to successfully develop their own tourism programs and to effectively work in partnership with AOT. The "How to Develop an Interactive Marketing Strategy" is a dynamic session that will present a wide range of interactive/online marketing topics in an easy to follow and practical format. Discussions will include fundamentals such as Web site basics, online advertising, e-mail campaigns, search engine optimization (SEO), measuring campaigns as well as best practices and useful interactive marketing tips. In addition, the workshop will cover advance topics including trends in social networking, mapping, Web site analytics, user-generated content and video. To register for a workshop please contact Sarah Martins at smartins@azot.gov or by phone at 602-364-3687.

November 14, 2007

1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Hon-Dah Resort-Casino and Conference Center

777 Highway 260

Pinetop, AZ 85935

December 5, 2007

1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Hotel Valley Ho

6850 East Main Street

Scottsdale, Arizona 85251

December 13, 2007

1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Cochise College Benson Campus

Room 113

1025 State Route 90

Benson, Arizona 85602

AOT's Research and Statistics Web site section has been updated

The Research and Statistics section of AOT's business-to-business Web site, www.azot.gov, has been updated. Visitors to the site can now find information on July 2007 Gross Sales, August 2007 Gross Sales, September 2007 Lodging Performance, 3rd Quarter Local Visitor Information Center Visitation numbers, and 3rd Quarter Painted Cliffs Welcome Center Visitation numbers. Information is available under the Research and Statistics section of www.azot.gov.

Trippin' with AOT

AOT Offers German Trade Show Opportunity

The Arizona Office of Tourism would like to invite you to join us at International Tourismus Boerse (ITB), the largest travel industry trade show in the world. ITB will be held March 5 - 9, 2008 in Berlin, Germany. More than 1,000,000 trade visitors and 11,000 exhibitors from 180 countries are expected to attend. ITB is not an appointment show; however, Arizona's representatives in Germany do schedule appointments with German, Austrian and Swiss tour operators and media representatives. Participation fees are as follows: **DMO's**: \$2,000 for the primary delegate and \$500 for the second delegate (plus travel) **Suppliers**: \$1,500 for primary delegate and \$500 for the second delegate (plus travel). Please contact Loretta Belonio at 602-364-3725 or via e-mail at lbelonio@azot.gov if you are interested in attending.

National Tour Association Annual Convention held in Kansas City, Mo.

Jennifer Sutcliffe, AOT's Travel Industry Marketing Manager, attended the National Tour Association (NTA) Annual Convention and Marketplace held in Kansas City, MO November 2-6, 2007. The Annual event is the largest marketplace for North American packaged travel companies to meet with North American travel suppliers. More than 2,500 delegates attended, nearly 50 were Arizona suppliers and DMOs, the largest Arizona contingent in recent history. Jennifer completed 50, 7-minute, pre-scheduled appointments with tour companies and assisted with specific Arizona product requests as well as general information. For many, tours including Arizona are still some of the most popular tours, but they want to add new ideas and activities in their current program including adding days and nights with new experiences included. The new Geotourism MapGuide and Arizona Origins were promoted with much interest in the featured sites. Culture and heritage tours and soft adventure for adults are of interest and we noticed more companies are beginning to cater to smaller, more exclusive groups as well as their typical sightseeing trips. New itineraries are frequently requested with new/unique activities and events as well as more requests for special interest programs and "experiences." Check back soon for a full Arizona report of the NTA Convention. For more information, contact Jennifer Sutcliffe at 602-364-3693 or via e-mail at jsutcliffe@azot.gov.

Industry News

New York To Develop WHTI-Compliant Driver's License

New York announced that it is developing an enhanced driver's license that would comply with the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative. New York follows Arizona, Washington and Vermont, which are also developing similar licenses. The WHTI requires passports or similar secured documents for entry into the U.S., including the land border with Canada. Enhanced driver's licenses would only be issued to individuals who provide proof of identity, citizenship and residence. A chip containing additional data on the license holder would be embedded into the license, which would cost more than a standard driver's license. Under the WHTI, passports or other WHTI-compliant documents, such as enhanced driver's licenses, will be required for

travelers crossing U.S. land borders and seaports beginning as early as next year; passports are already required under the WHTI for air travelers. (*Travel Weekly.com, 11/2*)

The Arizona Hotel & Lodging Association Auction is Officially Open!

The Arizona Hotel & Lodging Association has opened the Discover Arizona Auction. Items range from action-packed adventures to relaxing and romantic get-aways in Arizona's finest resorts. Share this exciting opportunity with your friends as these are one-of-a-kind packages, packed with destination tickets and unique merchandise and can be purchased for a fraction of their retail value. Proceeds from the auction event will support Arizona Hotel & Lodging Association's Education Foundation, which provides continuing education scholarships for current students and offers opportunities for high school students anxious to pursue a career in this field. Additionally, community relations programs and activities, which in turn support Arizona's hospitality community, will also be funded by this effort. [Click here](#) to access the online auction. For more information, contact the Arizona Hotel & Lodging Association at 602-604-0729.

TIA, TBA to Become Single Entity

The Travel Industry Association, Travel Business Roundtable and the Discover America Partnership on Jan. 1 will begin the process of becoming a single organization in 2009, officials of the three organizations announced last week. TIA announced last August it was engaging in discussions about a full merger with the TBR under which the two organizations would absorb the staff of the Discover America Partnership (TA, 8/8). Under the plan announced Thursday, TIA will absorb the staff of the DAP. The TBR and TIA will jointly create a multi-faceted public affairs program, and the two groups will explore a new name for the combined organization. (*Special to TA; Modern Agent.com; Travel Agent Central.com*)

AAA to Presented 5 Diamond Awards to 100 Properties

A record 100 hotels and resorts earned the top five-diamond rating in the 2008 AAA awards, to be announced today. AAA anointed 93 five-diamond lodgings last year. Four U.S. properties are new on the list this year: The Venetian Resort Hotel Casino in Las Vegas; The Canyon Suites at the Phoenician, Scottsdale, Ariz.; St. Regis Resort, Monarch Beach, Dana Point, Calif.; and The Umstead Hotel and Spa near Raleigh, N.C. Two lodgings lost five-diamond status: The Ritz-Carlton Lake Las Vegas in Nevada and the Pan Pacific Vancouver Hotel in British Columbia. Ritz-Carlton, with 24, and Four Seasons, with 22, accounted for nearly half of the list of five-diamond properties. (*Page 7D, USA Today*)

Southwest: Why No More "Cattle Calls"

More competitive rivals and high oil prices apparently were the major reasons Southwest finally changed its famous "cattle call" boarding, sources say. The company this week is rolling out a new boarding process nationwide that assigns each passenger a number indicating when they can get on the plane, sparing customers the need to line up before the flight in an effort to get the best seat. "No more cattle calls," said Chief Executive Officer Gary Kelly. In what some newspapers called an attempt to reach out to the "Gucci loafer and Hermes tie crowd," Southwest will also start giving preferential treatment to customers who pay more for their tickets. In the next few months, the airline will also be upgrading waiting areas at its gates with plush leather chairs with outlets for computers and recharging cell phones. What's next? Southwest is aiming at flights to Mexico and the Caribbean. What's behind the changes? Many of Southwest's competitors have gone through bankruptcy, allowing them to cut labor costs and shed unprofitable gate and plane leases. The result is that the airline's cost advantage over rivals has shrunk, and its pilots and

flight attendants are now the highest paid in the industry, reports *Business Week*. The rising price of fuel, which shows no signs of changing, also played a part. “This time I don't think anyone expects prices to come down. It radically changes the way you look at things,” said co-founder and chairman Herbert Kelleher. (*Report by David Wilkening, TravelMole e-newsletter*)